

Establishing a certification program for school business administrators

HB 1800 by Arnold/Haley

- DIGEST:** HB 1800 would have permitted school districts with 5,000 or more students to employ a certified chief school business administrator after September 1, 1993. The State Board of Education (SBOE) would have been granted rule-making authority to provide for certification of school business administrators and to set a reasonable certification fee. Certification requirements would have included a bachelor's degree and successful completion of a state-approved training program and examination. Upon recommendation of a school board, the SBOE would have certified individuals serving as chief school business administrators on the bill's effective date. The commissioner of education would have been able to revoke certification if a business administrator's business activities violated state law or if the official abandoned a contract with a school board; the commissioner also would have had reinstatement authority. The bill specified that school boards would have retained the authority to hire a certified or a noncertified chief school business administrator.
- GOVERNOR'S REASON FOR VETO:** "The interests of returning local control to school districts mandate that districts be allowed to make independent decisions concerning the qualifications of persons hired to administer district business. District trustees are assumed to be as capable and qualified in deciding such criteria as the State Board of Education."
- RESPONSE:** Rep. Bill Arnold, author of HB 1800, said the Governor's Office did not understand what the bill would really do. "This was a well-intended, well-planned program to make more accountable and better trained those who handle taxpayer dollars," said Rep. Arnold. Chief school business administrators manage district fiscal affairs, investments, cash flow, purchasing, transportation and food service, overseeing millions of dollars in public funds, yet unlike superintendents, principals and teachers they need not be certified or have special training or qualifications, he said.
- Rep. Arnold noted that the bill was permissive, not mandatory, would have applied to only around half of the school districts (those with 5,000 or more students) and would have allowed school districts to 'grandfather' certification of their current business administrators. The SBOE sets

qualifications and testing standards for other school officials, so it was appropriate for it to do the same for chief business administrators. Rep. Arnold said that if he had had a chance to explain the bill to the governor's staff, it probably would not have been vetoed.

NOTES:

HB 1800 was analyzed in the May 9 *Daily Floor Report*.